



The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

March 6, 2007

The Honorable Judith T. Spang, Chairman
Resources, Recreation and Development Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 305
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Subject: HB 648 establishing a commission to develop a comprehensive flood management plan

Dear Chairman Spang:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 648, which would establish a commission to develop a comprehensive flood management plan for the State of New Hampshire. As the bill is currently written, much of the work of the proposed commission will involve the study of the operation and maintenance of the dams in the state for flood reduction. The Department of Environmental Services (DES) is responsible for regulating the more than 3,000 dams in the state. Although the bill does not designate the Department as a member of the commission, the Department would welcome the opportunity to work with the Commission to present the capabilities and limits of the state's dams to control floods and evaluate where improvements can be made to reduce damages from flooding in the state.

Of the 3,065 dams in the state only 35 or approximately 1% are operated specifically for flood control; 7 of which are owned and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, one of which is town-owned, and the remaining 27 are owned and operated by the state. While some of the state's dams are operated to provide a seasonal drawdown to allow for spring runoff, the vast majority of the dams in the state are operated with full impoundments from mid-spring to mid-fall, and provide limited capability to reduce floods. While the number of flood control dams in the state is limited, the operation of these structures during floods can be enhanced through real-time meteorological and stream flow data collection and flood forecasting. We would welcome the opportunity to share with the Commission our experiences with these technologies and in flood operations, as well as our suggestions for further improvement.

Thank you again for this opportunity to comment, and please do not hesitate to call either me at 271-3503 or Jim Gallagher at 271-1961, if you have any questions or need additional information.

Very truly yours,

Thomas S. Burack
Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Representative Peyton B. Hinckle
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